

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KABUL 03536 032212Z
ACTION NEA-11

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 3536

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, AF
SUBJECT: THE AFGHAN CABINET: SOME OBSERVATIONS

REF: A. KABUL 3423; B. KABUL 3511

1. THE AFGHAN CABINET INCLUDES TWENTY-ONE MINISTERS HEADED
BY PRIME MINISTER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCIL NURFYOHAMMAD TARAKI. BASED ON BIOGRAPHIC DATA AT THE
EMBASSY WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS:

A. THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WERE FOUNDING
OR VERY EARLY MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN,
IDENTIFIED AS COMMUNISTS OF EITHER THE PARCHAM OR KHALQ VARIETY
IN THE MIDDLE-TO-LATE 1960'S. THIRTEEN OF THE 21 CABINET
MEMBERS CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS BELONGING TO THIS GROUP.
OF THE REMAINING EIGHT, SEVERAL OTHERS MAY HAVE BEEN CHARTER
MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT BUT THE SPARSE DATA AVAILABLE
TO US AT THIS TIME DOES NOT CONFIRM THIS.

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PAGE 02 KABUL 03536 032212Z

B. THERE ARE NO PROMINENT NON-COMMUNIST LEFTISTS IN THE
CABINET. THE ASSERTION WAS FREQUENTLY HEARD AROUND KABUL
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COUP THAT THE LEADERS OF THE NEW REGIME
WOULD BE LEFTISTS (OR ALLEGED COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS) SUCH
AS FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER MOHAMMAD HASSAN SHARQ (NOW
AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN); GHULAM JAILANAI BAKHTARI, FORMER MINISTER

OF AGRICULTURE; PACHA GUL, AMBASSADOR TO LIBYA; FAIZ MOHAMMAD, AMBASSADOR TO INDONESIA; AND NEHMATULLAH PAZHWAQ, FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION. NONE OF THESE MEN HAVE YET SURFACED AS A LEADER IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

C. ALTHOUGH THE APRIL 27 COUP D'ETAT WAS ASSUREDLY MILITARY, THERE ARE ONLY TWO IDENTIFIABLE MILITARY PROFESSIONALS-- LT COLONEL ABDUL QADER, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AND VICE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR MOHAMMAD ASLAM (WATANJAR?). WE DO NOT HAVE BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE OTHER MAN IN THE CABINET WHO IS PRESUMABLY A MILITARY OFFICER. (HOWEVER, ONE SOURCE OF UNKNOWN RELIABILITY HAS TOLD US THAT THE REAL POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT IS HELD BY QADER.)

D. FEW OF THE MINISTERS NAMED HAVE ANY KNOWN TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR THEIR NEW JOBS. EXCEPTIONS INCLUDE MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, DR. SHAH WALI; MINISTER OF RADIO AND TV, SULAIMAN LAEQ; MINISTER OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES ENGINEER MOHAMMAD ISMAIL DANESH; AND MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROFESSOR MAHMUD SUMA.

3. SIX OF THE SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY ARRESTED BY THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT ON APRIL 25 HAVE SURFACED AS MINISTERS: TARAKI, BABRAK KARMAL, DR. SHAH WALI, DASTAGIR PANJSHIRI, ABDUL HAKIN SHARAYEE, AND HAFIZULLAH AMIN. THE SEVENTH MAN ARRESTED, DR. ZAMIR SAFI, IS UNKNOWN
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PAGE 03 KABUL 03536 032212Z

TO THE EMBASSY. OBVIOUSLY, THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT WAS WELL TUNED INTO THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY, BUT FAILED TO USE THIS INFORMATION TO HIS ADVANTAGE.

F. FROM LIMITED AND SPECULATIVE DATA IT APPEARS THAT THE PARCHAM FACTION MAY HAVE RECEIVED MORE CABINET APPOINTMENTS THAN THE KHALQ FACTION. (THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN SPLIT INTO PARCHAM AND KHALQ IN 1967 AND ONLY REUNITED IN 1977.) KHALQUIST AFFILIATION CAN ONLY BE GIVEN TO THREE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET: TARAKI, FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN, AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE DR. SALEH MOHAMMAD ZARAY. IDENTIFIABLE PARCHAMISTS ARE SEVEN: BABRAK KARMAL, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTION COUNCIL AND VICE PRIME MINISTER; SULAIMAN LAEQ, MINISTER OF RADIO AND TV; NUR AHMAD PAN/2-8 (OR NUR), MINISTER OF INTERIOR; BAREK SHAFI'E, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE; DR. ANAHITA RATEBZADAH, MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS; ABDUL QADUS GHORBANDI, MINISTER OF COMMERCE; AND NEZAMUDDIN TAHZIB, MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS.

2. THE OBSERVATION THAT PARCHAMISTS MAY EXCEED KHALQUISTS IN NUMBERS IS SPECULATIVE AS THE AFFILIATION OF THE

OTHER ELEVEN CABINET MEMBERS CANNOT BE FIRMLY DEFINED. ALSO IT IS NOT KNOWN TO WHAT EXTENT OLD ANIMOSITIES MAY STILL DIVIDE THE TWO RECENTLY-UNITED FACTIONS. THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE 1967 SPLIT OF THE PARTY INTO TWO WINGS WAS BELIEVED TO BE PERSONALITY CLASHES BETWEEN TARAKI AND BABRAK, NOW NUMBER ONE AND TWO MEN IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, RATHER THAN IDEOLOGY.

3. CONCLUSIONS: THE AFGHAN CABINET IS AN IN-GROUP OF OLD FRIENDS AND FOES--A GROUP OF LONG-TERM AND DEDICATED COMMUNISTS, NONE OF WHO HAS HELD HIGH POSITION IN GOVERNMENT BEFORE, AND FEW OF WHOM, WE NOTE, KNOW HOW TO DRIVE A TANK OR FLY AN AIRPLANE. WE ARE WATCHING CAREFULLY FOR SIGNS OF TENSION BETWEEN TARAKI AND BABRAK, PARCHAM AND KHALQ, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 KABUL 03536 032212Z

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